

April-May 2012

GHSP NEWS

33 Fatalities

IN THIS ISSUE

Click It or Ticket Enforcement Campaign	P. 1
Vermont Highway Heroes Award Luncheon	P. 1
Chittenden County SHARP Team Nets Impaired Drivers	P. 2
Vermont Driver Cited with Testing, Holding Dog	P. 2
Crash Tip of the Month	P. 2
Alcohol Awareness: Keeping Prom and Graduation Celebrations Safe	P. 3
Fifth DUI Charge Lands Newfane Man in Jail for Five Years	P. 3
Mobile Road Weather Technology	P. 4

Click It or Ticket Enforcement Campaign

By Betsy Ross, PIO, GHSP

The Vermont Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP), supported by grant funding from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) launched a comprehensive enforcement campaign to increase the seatbelt usage rate throughout the state. These collaborative enforcement efforts provide federal funding for the Vermont State Police, municipal police agencies and county Sheriffs' departments to join forces in the national *Click It or Ticket* (CIOT) campaign. This year's *CIOT* campaign began on May 20th and continues through June 3rd.

Officers are performing high visibility enforcement, emphasizing the use of seatbelts in all areas of the state. What makes this year so unique is the unusually high number of persons who have been killed in crashes, in which, a seatbelt was not deployed.

During calendar year 2011 Vermont experienced 55 deaths on roadways in the state. This is the lowest number of roadway fatalities since 1944. But, this year has seen that number quickly climb to thirty-three (33) deaths in less than a five month period. A number of these deaths may have been averted by simply buckling up. "The single most important action you can take when

CLICK IT >> 4



DPS Commissioner Keith Flynn addresses the fatality rate and seat belt use at the Click It or Ticket kickoff press conference, May 21, 2012.

Vermont Highway Heroes Award Luncheon

Press Release – April 16, 2012

Waterbury – Each year the Vermont Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) recognizes individual Vermonters who have made significant contributions in support of highway safety programs. Award recipients for these accomplishments were honored April 12, 2012 at the Highway Heroes Award luncheon held at the Sheraton hotel in Burlington. The following is a short summary of events:

The 2011 *Lifesaver of the Year* award was presented to Vermont State Representative **William "Bill" Lippert**. Representative Lippert is recognized for extraordinary leadership, dynamic advocacy, and innovative policies which have saved countless lives by reducing impaired driving; For his passionate introduction and support of legislation promoting Ignition Interlocks; and, for the many years of energetic guidance, support and encouragement to all those who are engaged in traffic safety within the Green Mountain State.

The *Fletcher Brush* award is named for Fletcher Brush, a Middlebury highway safety activist for education and outreach efforts promoting highway safety. **Paul Graves** of the Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles was recognized for his outstanding and continuous dedication for promoting highway safety issues relating to motorcycle training, school bus safety, driver training, and education programs throughout Vermont.



Representative Bill Lippert recipient of 2011 Lifesaver of the Year award and Ted Minall, Chief GHSP

Fatalities to Date

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Average
Jan	6	5	2	9	2	12	6
Feb	8	8	1	1	4	6	4.6
March	3	3	3	4	3	3	3.3
April	7	8	5	4	4	3	5.1
May	5	7	9	8	3	9	7.1
June	4	12	11	6	5		7.1
July	7	7	4	3	4		5.8
Aug	10	3	11	6	8		7
Sept	4	7	5	8	4		6.8
Oct	2	7	3	6	8		4.8
Nov	6	2	7	8	5		5
Dec	4	4	12	8	3		6.4
Total	66	73	73	71	54	33	

LIFESAVERS >> 2

GHSP News

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Left to right: award recipients Orange County Sheriff Bill Bohnyak and Kevin Marshia, AOT

Chief Inspector Captain Drew Bloom, accepts the Fletcher Brush award for Paul Graves, DMV; Tom Fields, GHSP.

The *Sgt. Michael Johnson* award was presented to a Vermont law enforcement officer who demonstrates exceptional dedication to highway safety efforts. This year's recipient is **Sheriff Bill Bohnyak** of the Orange County Sheriff's Department. Sheriff Bohnyak's historically tireless efforts and passionate commitment to traffic safety, child passenger safety, occupant protection, and DUI enforcement within Orange County are extremely commendable.

The *Engineering Award* was presented to **Kevin Marshia**, of the Vermont Agency of Transportation. Kevin's passion, dedication and advocacy for collaborative interagency partnerships has helped bring engineering and behavioral disciplines together to create a force multiplier. ■

Vermont Driver Cited with Texting, Holding Dog

By Mike Donoghue – April 4, 2012

A new case of distracted driving in Vermont — allegedly involving a woman texting while driving with her dog sitting on her lap — underscores an ongoing problem across the nation, officials said in kicking off April as National Distracted Driving Awareness Month.

Sarah Gibson, 22, of St. Johnsbury has been cited into court on allegations of driving with a suspended license while having a dog in her lap and a cellphone in one hand, St. Johnsbury police said Wednesday.

Gibson was issued a \$156 traffic ticket — with two points against her license — on the texting allegation and also was ordered into criminal court May 21 to face the charge of driving with a suspended license, police said.

Gibson maintained she was not texting, but checking the time on her cellphone, which was being held above the steering wheel when spotted by police.

VERMONT DRIVER >>3

Chittenden County SHARP Team Nets Impaired Drivers

Press Release April 14, 2012 – Cpl. J. Marcoux

Officers representing six area police agencies saturated southern Chittenden County on Friday evening as part of the Chittenden County effort to prevent and detect impaired drivers.

Officers stopped more than 70 vehicles for various traffic violations in a six-hour span. Six operators were screened for possible impairment and, of these, three were charged with driving while intoxicated.

In addition, four operators were cited to appear in Vermont District Court to answer to the charge of Criminal Driving while License Suspended, and police seized alcohol from a minor. Three designated drivers were also encountered.

Police from Shelburne, Burlington, South Burlington, Williston, the Chittenden County Sheriff's Department and the Vermont Department of Liquor Control participated in this event. ■

Orange County Sheriff's Department

Submitted by Lt. David Eggum

Spring has sprung and so has the Orange County Sheriff's Department. In featured photos are bike rodeos, checkpoints and turn off texting messaging. Safety awareness is off to a good start!



Crash Tip of the Month — by Mandy White, AOT

Now that we have a few years of crash data entered into Web Crash we wanted to take the opportunity to remind law enforcement that they need to check their reports into the program in order for DMV and AOT to "receive" the reports. If the reports are not checked in, they are not counted towards those jurisdiction totals. In extreme cases a town could fail to receive federal funds for safety related projects because the data was not there to justify the project need.

Currently there are 40 crashes that were apparently not submitted for 2010 and 50 for 2011. Please take a look at least at your agency's 2011 In Progress reports and determine if they should be "checked in" and submitted to the crash repository. ■

Alcohol Awareness: Keeping Prom and Graduation

Celebrations Safe – Press Release April 25, 2012 – Betsy Ross, GHSP, PIO

As prom and graduations ramp up for high schools, the Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) is reminding parents, teens and others of the dangers of underage drinking, and the legal consequences of providing alcohol to minors.

Make sure prom night is a positive experience you'll always remember; don't drink alcohol or use any other substances that will compromise your ability to make good decisions.

"Proms and graduations are a time for celebration, but please be safe and make smart choices," said Keith Flynn, Commissioner of Department of Public Safety. "Remember: it is illegal for anyone under the age of 21 to possess or consume alcohol, and NEVER drink alcohol and drive, or accept a ride with someone who has been drinking."

Statistics show nearly one-third of alcohol-related teen traffic deaths occur during April, May and June, a time when parties and celebrations can turn dangerous and sometimes tragic for underage drinkers. With these sobering statistics in mind, Governor's Highway Safety Program encourages parents to talk with their teens about the dangers of underage drinking, and set ground rules before their son or daughter leaves the house for these events.

PROM and GRADUATION SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Set non-negotiable rules about drinking, drugs and driving under the influence of alcohol.
- Ask your teen for a complete itinerary for the evening, including where they will be going before, during and after prom.
- Ask for cell phone numbers so you can reach them, and/or establish call-in times to connect with your child.
- Be aware of alcoholic energy drinks, which contain 6-12 percent alcohol, nearly three times more alcohol than most beers.
- If your child is going to an after-prom party at a friend's house, it is your responsibility to find out if the parents are going to allow underage drinking at their home.
- Offer your child the unconditional option of calling you for help, advice or to pick them up at any time, day or night. Make it clear you want to be part of their smart and safe decisions.

To ensure a safe night of celebration, GHSP also sends a reminder to always buckle up, pay attention behind the wheel, and speak up to stop unsafe driving behaviors. ■

Vermont Driver << 2

St. Johnsbury police said they were monitoring traffic Tuesday on Memorial Drive when Sgt. Eric Hazard spotted Gibson texting while driving her 2001 truck. Jennifer McGarvin said.

McGarvin said Vermont law prohibits drivers from having anything between them and the steering wheel. Gibson received a written warning for having the dog in her lap, and also for failing to carry her vehicle registration and proof of liability insurance in the truck, McGarvin said. The head of the Vermont Governor's Highway Safety Program, Ted Minall cited the case as an example of a continuing problem. "Nothing I see on the roadway surprises me anymore. It is possible to see people shaving, eating, reading, holding dogs, playing video games," said Minall.

The Governor's Highway Safety Program, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the National Safety Council have joined forces this month to urge drivers to avoid distractions while driving.

The council estimates 28 percent of all accidents — or 1.6 million crashes — each year are caused by drivers using handheld or hands-free cellphones or texting while driving. It is the leading distraction for crashes, according to the council.

Vermont is among 36 states that prohibit texting while driving.

Contact Mike Donoghue at 660-1845 or mdonoghue@burlingtonfreepress.com.

Fifth DUI Charge Lands Newfane Man in Jail for Five Years

By Bob Audette / Reformer Staff Brattleboro Reformer | Posted: May 1, 2012 03:00 AM EDT

BRATTLEBORO -- A man who pleaded guilty to his fifth driving under the influence charge will spend at least four of the next seven years in jail.

According to Windsor County State's Attorney Robert Sand, Matthew Mabe, 29, of Newfane, was sentenced on April 26 to four to seven years in jail for repeated DUI offenses, driving with a suspended license and the violation of his conditions of release while awaiting trial.

"At the hearing we introduced certified copies of his criminal conviction and his driving record," said Sand. Mabe and his girlfriend presented testimony and his attorney spoke on his behalf, he said.

Mabe was taken into custody immediately following his sentencing, said Sand.

Mabe's most recent arrest occurred on Sept. 24, 2011, after which he was charged with operating a vehicle in violation of the conditions of release he received after his Nov. 14, 2010, arrest for driving under the influence.

In that case, Mabe crashed his car on Route 100, rolling his 1994 Saab 900, during which he broke his leg. At that time he was under driving suspension for life due to previous DUI infractions.

FIFTH DUI >> 4

Prior to being arrested, said Sand, Mabe blew a .149 blood alcohol content, but refused to undergo a second test after being arrested.

Mabe was also arrested on West River Road in Brattleboro on July 5, 2008, for DUI and driving with a suspended license. Only July 1, 2007, Mabe was arrested on Park Place in Brattleboro and charged with DUI.

"We don't get a lot of fifth offenses, said Sand.

The case was handled by his office because there was a conflict of interest: Mabe was familiar with an employee in the Windham Superior Court Criminal Division.

Recently, the Vermont Legislature changed the law related to DUI, increasing the possible penalty to 10 years. Sand said this was a message to prosecutors that repeat DUI offenders need to spend more time in jail than in past convictions.

Mabe will spend at least four years in jail, said Sand, after which the Parole Board will evaluate his progress in jail and decide whether he deserves to be released or offered furlough.

"But any release before he's finished his full term will be under some sort of conditions," said Sand. If he serves the full seven years, he said, Mabe will have no conditions imposed upon his release. Whatever happens while Mabe is in jail, said Sand, it would behoove him to engage in substance abuse counseling. Windham County Deputy State's Attorney Steven Brown said Mabe's sentence was appropriate. It's a great sentence for a recidivist DUI offender," said Brown. "Hopefully it will send as strong message to the community."

Brown thanked the Windsor County State's Attorney's Office for prosecuting the case.

Bob Audette can be reached at raudette@reformer.com, or at 802-254-2311, ext. 160. ■

Mobile Road Weather Technology --

The Vaisala Condition Patrol DSP310 is the first-of-its-kind solution available to road weather maintenance professionals. The Condition Patrol uses the most advanced technology to provide decision makers with a complete mobile weather solution to monitor their road network. The Condition patrol uses sensors that have been trusted for many years by maintenance operators around the world. The system collects the data and displays it on a smart phone on the dashboard of the vehicle. The data can be brought back through the phone's mobile network to be displayed in Vaisala's road weather management software for the viewing by others in the agency.

The Condition Patrol provides the following mobile measurements:

- Road Condition (Dry, Moist, Wet, Snow, Ice)
- Surface Temperature
- Grip (Slipperiness)
- Dew Point Temperature
- Air Temperature
- Humidity
- Layer Thicknesses

For a tour of the Vaisala -- <http://mobiletour.vaisala.com/> ■



you get into your car or truck is to take that few seconds and click on your seat belt. It doesn't cost anything and it can let you live to enjoy your life", said Ted Minall, the Chief of GHSP. Minall went on to ask parents to "Please set a good example for your children and other members of the family, show them how much you love them by being a role model and buckling up".

Department of Public Safety Commissioner Keith Flynn is seriously concerned about the latest rash of unbelted fatalities. Commissioner Flynn is making similar appeal "Every day there's more than 90,000 motorists who are moving around our state not wearing a seatbelt. These may be tragedies waiting to happen". Commissioner Flynn warns "If you're stopped for a traffic violation and you're not wearing your seat belt you've placed yourself and others in jeopardy, you will be ticketed".

Tom Fields the Law Enforcement Liaison for GHSP coordinates the CIOT campaign for the state. Fields points out that there will be intensified enforcement, focused in those areas where seatbelt use has been historically low. Fields asks: "Please help us, help you, save your life or a member of your family's life, just put on your seat belt every time for every trip". Fields went on to offer: "Give yourself and your family a chance to survive a crash, save the pain, the anguish, the terrible economic impact and the tragedies that result from losing a loved one in a crash, it's all so avoidable, just click that seatbelt, you owe it to your family". ■

Photos top to bottom: Lt. Governor, Phil Scott, South Burlington Fire Rescue, and Chittenden County SHARP mobile, Child Passenger Safety Program, and the Fletcher Allen Trauma Team were all participants supporting the benefits of seat belt use.

